

## GREEN OPTIONS

# NCL group takes science to schools to “excite not teach” students

‘The Exciting Science Group’, a group of scientists including from the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune, is working to share the excitement of science with school children.

Set up with the goal of not to “teach” science, but to “excite” children,

the initiative has gained momentum since it was started in September 2008. The group now includes over 20 scientists from NCL; faculty from adjoining Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Bombay); staff from the NCL Ven-

ture Center, which has been set up in the campus of NCL; and enthusiastic volunteers.

### Partnering with schools

The group is now partnering with three schools, and will conduct five modules, at each of these schools

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## Top Stories

over the year. Specifically targeting students in the 8-10 Standards, each module is based on a topic from the regular school science curriculum, but aimed to arouse the curiosity of students, rather than teach them science. The modules mainly comprise exciting demonstrations and videos to illustrate properties and applications, and discuss the history behind the science.

The first module in this series is on the ‘Discovery of Elements.’ This was first launched at the Jawahar Navo-

daya in Shikrapur on 9 July, and will be presented at two schools in Pune: the Vidya Niketan, Hutatma Balveer School in Pune (23 July) and the Valley View School in Kondhwa (31 July). Dr. K. Guruswamy, NCL Scientist, will deliver these lecture-demonstrations.

This lecture demonstration includes several experiments conducted “live”, in front of the students, such as generation of hydrogen gas, and setting a hydrogen balloon on fire; spectroscopy using a flame test – with visu-

ally stunning coloured flames; making nylon polymers; properties of powerful rare earth magnets; spectacular videos of white phosphorous burning, safety match stick chemistry, etc.

The group also conducts popular talks by researchers and practitioners on various topics in science, technology and mathematics for school children (12-15 years). These are held once a month at 10 AM on Sunday mornings at the NCL Innovation Park, and are free and open to students and science teachers.

## RECOGNITION

# Dr. S. Sivaram awarded ‘Goyal Prize’ in Applied Sciences

Dr. S. Sivaram, Director, National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune has been awarded the ‘Goyal Prize’ for 2007 in the area of Applied Sciences for his contribution to polymer science and its industrial applications for over three decades.

The prize, which carries a cash award, a gold medal and a citation, was presented to Dr.



Dr. Sivaram receiving the award from Prof. Goverdhan Mehta

Sivaram by Prof. Goverdhan Mehta, former Director, Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore) at a ceremony held at Kurukshetra University on April 19, 2010.

Other recipients of the award in Applied Sciences in earlier years include Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Prof. J.B. Joshi and Dr. N.K. Ganguli.